



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

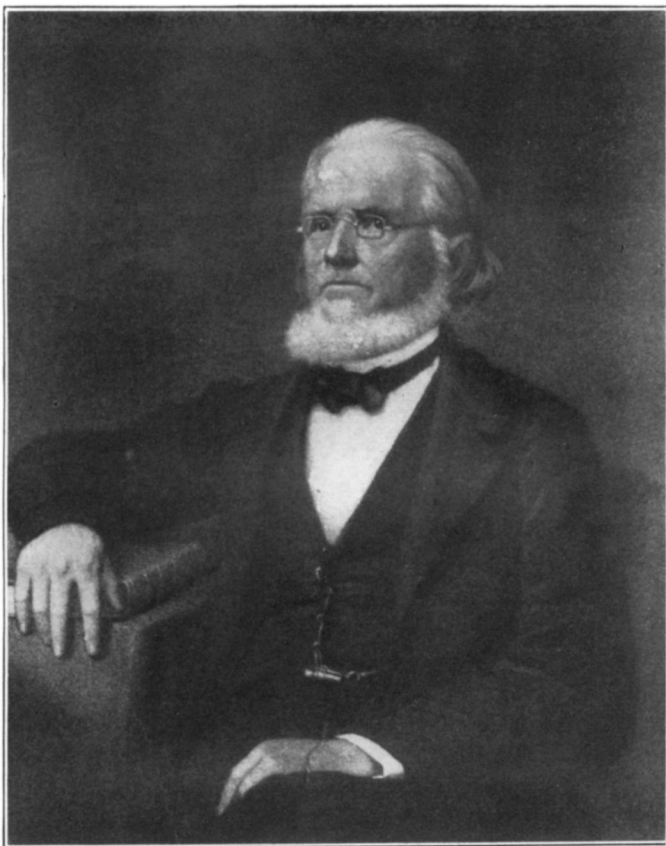
This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



REV. THOMAS LIPPINCOTT.

EDWARD COLES, SECOND GOVERNOR OF  
ILLINOIS—CORRESPONDENCE WITH  
REV. THOMAS LIPPINCOTT.

---

Among the "old guard" in the anti-slavery contest in this State in 1824 was the Rev. Thomas Lippincott, one of the pioneer preachers of Illinois who was, in 1823, Secretary of the State Senate, when the Legislature passed the resolution submitting the convention question to a vote of the people, and was an active worker against it in the succeeding campaign. This gentleman, in his old age, between 1858 and 1860, published in one or two local papers his reminiscences of the contest of 1824, under the title of "The Conflict of the Century." To a certain statement in one of these papers Governor Coles, writing from Philadelphia to Mr. Lippincott, in September, 1860, took exception as follows:

"You are mistaken in supposing that the subject of slavery had not been a prominent topic in the political discussions of Illinois previous to its becoming a State. On the contrary, at a very early period of the settlement of Illinois the question was warmly agitated by zealous advocates and opponents of slavery. This state of things was increased by the country having been made the abode of the white and black races, in the relation of master and slaves, from its first settlement by Christians to 1787, when slavery was prohibited by law, but tolerated by custom, aided by ignorance. Before the separation of Illinois from Indiana, Congress was petitioned by the Territorial Legislature to repeal the "Ordinance of

1787." It was on a petition of this kind that the celebrated John Randolph of Virginia, as chairman of a committee of Congress, made his memorable report adverse to the prayer for the repeal of the Ordinance and the toleration of slavery. The report was adopted by Congress with little or no opposition. Finding from this and other indications that there was no prospect of Congress repealing this fundamental law, the advocates of slavery had to content themselves with retaining in servitude, in violation of the ordinance, what were called "French Slaves," and in extending bondage to a limited extent to other negroes under the denomination of "indentures." During the existence of this state of things the slavery agitation was lulled but not extinguished, as was seen by its mingling itself so actively, both in the election and conduct of the members of the convention which made the Constitution in 1818. I am the more conversant with the character of that convention from having attended it during my first visit to Illinois, and made the acquaintance and learned the opinions, views and wishes of its prominent members. Many, but not a majority of its members, were in favor of making Illinois a slave State. (Signed) EDWARD COLES."

In regard to this exception Mr. Lippincott made the following comment:

"There were those who wrote more in the newspapers, but there was no one more indefatigably nor more disinterestedly engaged in the effort to keep out the curse of slavery than Edward Coles, then Governor of the State. He had been rich, was still possessed of a competence, perhaps considerable wealth, but he had diminished this wealth, whatever it was, by the voluntary emancipation of the slaves that fell to him by heirship, and this he had done against the earnest protest of his family, who proposed to purchase the slaves by giving him an equivalent in other property. Instead of this, he brought them to Illinois, emancipated them and settled them on land he

purchased for them as theirs. When the effort was put forth to make Illinois a slaveholding State, he united with its opponents with a zeal worthy of a noble hearted Virginia gentleman. His home since has not been in Illinois, and his associates in that great contest have not seen him in many years. His head has, doubtless, become whiter, as well as that of him whose unsteady hand traces these recollections; but the heart of the writer must cease to throb before it will cease to feel grateful to Edward Coles for his efficient agency in procuring that decision which has brought Illinois, within her first half century to rank as the third or fourth State of this great Union. His chief efficiency was, perhaps, in procuring and circulating, in pamphlet form mainly, any popular work on slavery that could be got by an extensive correspondence. His daily counsels and hints, however, to a little band of men in Edwardsville suggested and encouraged many an article which he saw not and knew not of until he saw it in print. \* \* \* The election was a hot time. The weather was warm enough, being early in August, and the people were heated with excitement. Yet it is believed that as few excesses occurred on that day as on any general election since, in which there was special interest. And when the votes were counted and it was ascertained that the people had decided not to call a convention for the purpose of opening our State to slavery, there was a great calm. The defeated party submitted quietly; the triumphant party rejoiced without noise or show. The only demonstration I remember was a day of religious thanksgiving, held by a few of those who had been most actively engaged, in which an address was delivered, and praise and prayer to God were the prominent exercises. The joy was too deep for noisy clamor. The strife had been too momentous, the triumph too sacred for mirth or levity."

Another rejoinder to these reminiscences was made by Governor Coles to Mr. Lippincott, as below :

"I gladly avail myself of this occasion to express my obligations to you for the kind and gratifying notice you take of me in your publication. At the same time allow me to add, if you had been aware of the extent of the labors of my pen you would not have said I had not written much. The hostility imbibed by Mr. Warren against me prevented my contributing to his paper (*The Edwardsville Spectator*), but I contributed to other papers, over various signatures, and published several pamphlets, and caused many to be published, several of which I assisted in circulating, particularly those you allude to from the enlightened and philanthropic pen of my friend, Roberts Vaux, of this city (Philadelphia). My labor in the cause was so great that during the several months which passed between the purchasing the *Illinois Intelligencer*, there were but few numbers of that paper which did not contain some article from my pen, either original essays—the most methodical and lengthy of which were contained in nine numbers over the signature of 'One of Many.' Also numerous extracts from the writings and speeches of the most celebrated men of America and Europe, many of which were published under the title of 'The Voice of Virtue—Wisdom and Experience on the Subject of Negro Slavery.'

(Signed)

"EDWARD COLES."

To this letter Mr. Lippincott appended this note:

"Of the manifold labors of Governor Coles in other respects I was aware, and have endeavored to do him justice in regard to them. But I confess I was not aware of the amount of writing for the papers on the subject which he performed. In addition to what I did know, it must be called immense. \* \* \*"

Mr. Lippincott then adds: "I cannot resist the temptation to add further extracts from letters received from

Governor Coles in reference to this eventful period. In his letter to me of June 15, 1860, after speaking of the severe and chronic neuralgia which made it painful and difficult for him to write, he continues:

“This inability I regret the more, and will exert myself the more—yes, to the utmost extent of my diseased powers—to aid you, as I still feel, and the longer I witness the disgraceful scenes of the present times, in upholding and extending slavery—the greater the interest and the more hearty satisfaction I feel at the part I acted, and the gratification I derive from reflection on the course I pursued, and the agency I had in preserving the prairies of Illinois from the curse of slavery. I assure you this is to me a source of great consolation as I approach the termination of my earthly existence and calmly review the past and anticipate the future. Whether I get credit as helmsman for steering the Illinois ship of state through the conflicting tempests which raged so violently between the extremes of freedom and slavery, I certainly review my conduct on that tempestuous occasion with approbation and indescribable satisfaction.”

In a letter written to the late Hon. W. C. Flagg, in March, 1861, Governor Coles speaks of his first visit to Illinois as having been made in October, 1815. In the above letter he says his first visit was made in 1818 and that he was present at Kaskaskia when the Constitution of the new State was adopted. The discrepancy in dates was doubtless occasioned simply by a temporary lapse of memory, as Hon. E. B. Washburne also, in his biography, speaks of Governor Coles' first visit to the State having been made in 1815.